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REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCLUDING DOCUMENT OF THE TWELFTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. On 16 December 1993, the General Assembly adopted without a vote resolution 48/76 E entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific and United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean", by which, inter alia, it requested the Secretary-General to report to it at its forty-ninth session on the implementation of that resolution.

2. The present report is submitted pursuant to that request and covers the period from August 1993 to July 1994.

II. FUNCTIONING OF THE REGIONAL CENTRES

3. The end of the cold war has brought about a significant change in the international security environment. Arms control and disarmament remain of primordial importance, but they are increasingly seen as part and parcel of a broader concept of peace and security, as well as in many respects facilitating efforts in the field of preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building. While matters pertaining to nuclear and other traditional global disarmament issues occupy an important place on the disarmament agenda, emphasis in the pursuit of disarmament has also gradually shifted to a new strategy, the most notable part of which is the regional approach to disarmament.

4. In the face of recent fundamental changes in the international situation, regional and subregional issues have acquired additional urgency and importance in the field of disarmament and international security. Regional approaches to disarmament could promote openness, transparency and confidence-building and also curb the proliferation of weapons by taking into account the prevailing political and security conditions in each region. Reflecting these circumstances, and while maintaining the mandate, paragraphs 1 and 3 of General Assembly resolution 48/76 E refer to new areas of the activities of the regional centres in the following manner:

> "1. Commends the activities being carried out by the regional centres in identifying and broadening the understanding of pressing disarmament and security issues and exploring optimum solutions under given specific conditions prevailing in each region, in accordance with their mandates.
>
> "3. Also encourages further use of the potential of the regional centres to maintain the increased interest in and momentum for revitalization of the Organization to meet the challenges of a new phase of international relations in order to fulfil the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations related to peace, disarmament and development, taking into account the guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security as adopted by the Disarmament Commission at its 1993 substantive session."

5. While the regional centres could play a meaningful role in the post-cold-war era, the experience of the years since the establishment of the centres has shown that Member States, though willing to finance substantive activities, are more reluctant to provide resources for the administrative and related costs of the centres. The Secretary-General wishes to emphasize that, in accordance with the terms under which the centres were established, voluntary contributions remain the primary source of financing for the activities of the centres and are thus needed to enable the centres to carry out their mandated tasks. However, guaranteed funding is also essential to cover the administrative costs. Without a satisfactory solution to this question, the centres will not be able to carry out their functions, and even less so in meeting the new challenges. In fact, owing to the unpredictability in sustaining the administrative and related costs, a decline in voluntary contributions for substantive activities has already been felt.

6. Since only the posts of Director are approved by the General Assembly to be financed from the regular budget, the lack of resources has resulted in the reduction of local staff. In this regard, it should be recalled that, on a temporary basis, the General Assembly, by its resolution 47/219 B of 6 May 1993, approved the commitment authority of $150,000 under section 37, Department of political affairs, of the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 in order to provide for the administrative support of the regional centres. However, no such provision was made for the biennium 1994-1995. Under the circumstances, the centres have not been able to develop their full capacity and may thus miss new opportunities for them to contribute to the process of promoting regional approaches to disarmament and security. Because of serious financial constraints, the programmes of the centres during the reporting period have been readjusted accordingly, resulting in curtailed activities. Therefore, should Member States be unwilling to finance the administrative costs of the centres, alternative solutions will have to be found in order for them to fulfil their mandates and play an effective role. Failure in this may bring the operation of the centres to a halt.

7. It should be recalled that the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Asia and the Pacific were established in 1986, 1987 and 1988 respectively. The centres function under the auspices of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, which acts as the focal point for coordinating inputs to the activities of the centres by pertinent organs, programmes and agencies of the United Nations system. The centres are located respectively at Lomé, Lima, and Kathmandu.

A. Regional Centre in Africa

1. Objectives and activities of the Centre

8. During the reporting period, the Centre's activities continued to focus primarily on the dissemination of information relating to disarmament, peace and security within the African context. Because of the serious financial constraints faced by the Centre and the prevailing local situation, the Centre has been operating in a very limited manner.

9. The Centre also continued to distribute information materials on disarmament and related issues published by the Secretariat and other United Nations organizations, including the Newsletter of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs.

10. The Centre's documentation/reference library continued to receive publications from within and outside the African region and provided library facilities to students and researchers.

11. The Centre provided substantive and organizational support to the third ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held from 30 August to 3 September 1993 at Libreville, and its fourth meeting, held from 4 to 8 April 1994 at Yaoundé. The Centre will continue to provide similar support to the Committee's fifth ministerial meeting, scheduled to take place at Yaoundé, from 5 to 9 September 1994. The Centre also provided secretarial and substantive support to the Secretary-General's advisory mission to Mali concerning the proliferation of illicit small arms in the Saharo-Sahelian subregion, which took place in August 1994.

12. Because of the lack of sufficient financial resources, the workshop on "Post conflict integration of the armed forces and civil-military relations in southern Africa", initially scheduled to take place at Harare, has been postponed to the first half of 1995.

13. In response to invitations extended to the Centre, the Acting Director of the Centre participated in a high-level workshop on "Restructuring the security forces for a new South Africa", organized by the Southern African Peacemaking Project of the Institute of International Education, held at Harare from 26 to 28 January 1994. He also attended a working meeting on "Demobilization and reintegration of former soldiers" held in New York on 7 June 1994, organized by the Refugee Policy Group, and a World-Bank-sponsored seminar on "Demobilization and reintegration", held in Washington, D.C. on 21 June 1994. At the invitation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), he made a presentation on "Disarmament and demilitarization in southern Africa" at a ministerial meeting held at Windhoek from 11 to 16 July 1994.

2. Staffing and finance

14. Since the resignation of its Director in July 1992, responsibility for the Centre has been assumed by its Acting Director. At the same time, funding shortfalls have necessitated freezing one General Service post of the Centre since 31 March 1994 in addition to the three that were frozen the previous year.

15. Since the submission of the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/48/346), voluntary contributions in the amount of $36,430.43 have been pledged to the Centre, and a total of $28,000 had been received as of July 1994. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Australia and Norway for their generous contributions.

B. Regional Centre in Latin America and the Caribbean

1. Objectives and activities of the Centre

16. During the reporting period, the Centre, despite severe financial constraints, continued to fulfil its mandate in so far as possible and maintain its contacts and cooperation with governmental and non-governmental organizations, research centres, academic institutions and other United Nations bodies so as to further the objectives of the Centre.

17. The Centre continued to expand its efforts, mainly through publication activities, in promoting awareness of the current threats to peace, of disarmament in the region and of the means for preventing or reducing the causes of tension or insecurity.

18. The Centre also continued to strengthen its contacts and cooperation with other United Nations bodies, governmental and non-governmental organizations and academic and other institutions. In this connection, the Centre is providing assistance to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Peru in its organization of an international seminar on "The implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention", scheduled to be held in September 1994. It is also working on a proposal from the organization International Alert, based in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to co-host a colloquium on "Peace-making in Latin America", scheduled to be held at Lima, during the second half of November 1994.

19. At the regional level, the Centre is committed to establishing stronger ties and coordination with the Organization of American States (OAS), especially with its Special Commission on Hemispheric Security. The meeting of experts on "Confidence-building measures and security mechanisms in the region" held at Buenos Aires in March 1994, is an example of possible areas of cooperation that the Centre intends to pursue in the near future.

20. The Centre's reference Library has continued to expand with the addition of publications, both of the United Nations and from donations and acquisitions. The library serves as a useful source of bibliographical material on peace, security, disarmament, development and international relations for researchers and students.

21. A book containing the proceedings of the seminar on "Proliferation and confidence- and security-building measures", organized by the Centre and held at Asunción in January 1993, was published by the Centre and officially released in Lima on 20 June 1994, at a ceremony attended by high-level Peruvian officials, diplomats, academics, military and researchers.

22. The Centre has continued to publish its quarterly Boletín containing news on United Nations activities and developments in the area of disarmament, feature articles on Latin American disarmament and security issues, and information on the activities and publications of non-governmental organizations and research centres engaged in areas related to the work of the Centre. Four issues of the Boletín have been produced during the reporting period.

2. Staffing and finance

23. The Director of the Centre resigned in August 1993 and, since then, responsibility for the Centre has been assumed by the Officer-in-Charge.

24. Since the submission of the previous report of the Secretary-General, voluntary contributions in the amount of $30,757 have been pledged; a total of $23,304.54 had been received as of July 1994. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of Bolivia, Colombia, Spain and Mexico for their generous contributions to the Centre.

C. Regional Centre in Asia and the Pacific

1. Objectives and activities of the Centre

25. During the reporting period, the Centre continued to carry out its activities in accordance with its mandate. While financial resources available to the Centre remain limited, the Centre managed to organize two major regional meetings at Kathmandu and Hiroshima, Japan, respectively, as well as three one-day seminars at Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Kyoto, Japan, respectively. Its activities also included disseminating information on United Nations activities in the field of disarmament, and responding to inquiries from the general public, students and non-governmental organizations.

26. The Director continued to hold consultations with Member States in New York, Kathmandu and Hiroshima, as well as with academic researchers within the Asia-Pacific region to seek their views on how to maximize the use of the Centre and implement its mandate effectively. The consultations revealed a wide recognition that the Centre should encourage regional and subregional dialogue for the enhancement of openness, transparency and confidence-building, and the promotion of disarmament and security through the organization of regional meetings with an agenda appropriately adjusted to focus on these issues.

27. The meetings organized by the Centre are intended to promote regional dialogue, through which pressing disarmament and security issues can be identified and an optimum and region-oriented solution can be found. The maintenance and promotion of these dialogues is now called the "Kathmandu process", the continuation of which has gained strong support from Member States within the region. Also, strong support was expressed for the idea of the creation of a close network, linking the Centre and its constituencies within the region, as a way of exchanging data and information related to disarmament and security.

28. A regional meeting, the sixth in the series, on "Cooperation in the maintenance of peace and security and disarmament" was held at Kathmandu from 31 January to 2 February 1994. A total of 47 participants from Governments, research institutes, the mass media and non-governmental organizations attended the meeting. Against the backdrop of the increasing importance of regional approaches, and in the context of a new security dimension, the meeting reviewed issues such as the maintenance of peace and security and regional disarmament within the Asia-Pacific region. The meeting also addressed non-proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction in south Asia, responsibilities of the nuclear-weapon States, monitoring non-proliferation, and new dimensions of nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula. The major presentations made at the meeting were later published by the Centre for Disarmament Affairs in its Topical Papers Series, No. 18.

29. In cooperation with the Prefecture and City of Hiroshima, as well as the Government of Japan, the Centre organized a disarmament conference on "Transparency in armaments, regional dialogue and disarmament", which was held at Hiroshima, Japan, from 24 to 27 May 1994. A total of 67 participants and 17 observers from Governments, research institutes, non-governmental organizations and the media from within and outside the Asia-Pacific region attended the conference.

30. In order to meet the increasing interest in promoting regional approaches to security and disarmament issues, and building upon the results of the Centre's previous activities, the conference focused its work on initiatives to promote regional dialogues that were being explored in governmental and non-governmental sectors. These included such topics as the prospect of a regional forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), conditions for north-east Asia regional dialogue, conditions for south Asia regional dialogue, and the Korean Peninsula. In this connection, the conference reviewed the applicability of the "Guidelines and recommendations for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security", adopted by consensus at the 1993 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

31. The conference also focused on the current trends in nuclear disarmament, such as nuclear reduction, the responsibilities of nuclear-weapon States, threshold States, a comprehensive nuclear test ban and nuclear non-proliferation. The papers presented at the conference were later published by the Centre for Disarmament Affairs in its Topical Papers Series, No. 20.

32. In conjunction with the disarmament conference held at Hiroshima, the Centre cooperated with the local authorities in organizing the following three one-day seminars: "Nuclear disarmament and security talks today", held at Hiroshima on 27 May 1994; "Nuclear and other disarmament efforts", held at Nagasaki on 29 May; and "New trends in nuclear disarmament", held at Kyoto on 31 May 1994. Each of these seminars consisted of presentations by five to seven panelists on various aspects of nuclear disarmament and conditions for regional dialogue, followed by question-and-answer sessions, during which a broad exchange of views between the panelists and audience took place.

33. At the invitation of the Programme for Promoting Nuclear Non-Proliferation, a non-governmental organization, the Director of the Centre participated in its meeting on "South-Asia nuclear energy and nuclear non-proliferation" held from 5 to 7 November 1993, at Kandy, Sri Lanka. The Director also attended a regional conference on "Studying Asia-Pacific security" organized jointly by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies and the University of Toronto-York University Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies, held in Bali, Indonesia, from 2 to 15 December 1993. These meetings provided a good opportunity for the Centre to strengthen its interaction with non-governmental organizations and academic institutes.

2. Staffing and finance

34. Because of the serious financial constraints, apart from its Director, the Centre has been without any local staff support since its establishment. In this regard, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations information officers at Kathmandu have provided the Centre with logistic support in its organization of the annual regional meeting held at Kathmandu in January 1994 (see para. 28 above).

35. Since the submission of the report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly in 1993, voluntary contributions in the amount of $58,638.32 have been pledged to the Centre, and a total of $7,808.32 had been received as of July 1994. The Secretary-General wishes to express his gratitude to the Governments of China, Italy, Japan, Nepal, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand, as well as Rissho Kosei-Kai, a Japanese non-governmental organization, for their generous contributions.